

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

PRIME, Geoffrey Arthur - KGB Penetration of GCHQ.

FROM:

[Redacted]

5E11 Hqs.

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

18 November 1982

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. DD Policy & management
OS 4E60

11/19/82

2. ~~DD Personnel Security & Investigations~~ 4E58

3. Chief, Security Education Group 4E21

4. Chief, Security Analysis Group, 4E13

5. Chief, Industrial Security Br. [Redacted]

6. DD/I CRES

2F42

7. DD/a Office of Medical Services ATTN: [Redacted]

8. Chairman, DCI SECOM

9. D!OS

2 Dec 82

10. C/SSC/PM

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

Attached, for the information of the addressees, are press comments from the London TELEGRAPH of 11 Nov 82, which provide new insight into the PRIME case.

The Crown prosecutor's statements in open court paint a picture of PRIME as a security officer's nightmare. Himself a victim of sexual child molestation became a molester as an adult. The child of an unhappy marriage, his own first marriage collapsed. Upon the death of his parents and his own loss of religious faith, he sought a new anchor in the Soviets. Seriously depressed in 1972, he sought psychiatric counsel.

So much for the personnel side, but the case is replete with other howlers. Undetected photocopying of classified material and its removal from GCHQ; undetected travel to the Bloc. etc.

Background Info

10. THANKS.

Daily Telegraph
11 NOV '82



Mrs Rhona Prime, 37, who reported her husband, Geoffrey, to police after he had told her of sexual offences involving young girls—and his espionage activities.

I forgive him, says wife

By ALAN COPPS

MRS RHONA PRIME, who took the agonising decision to inform police about her husband's spying activities, publicly forgave him before being helped weeping from the Old Bailey's No. 1 court yesterday.

"I intend to stand by my husband. As a Christian I can only utterly condemn the terrible crimes he has committed.

"But I know in my heart as a Christian I can forgive him because he is totally repentant and remorseful and is so full of guilt. He is a broken man," she told the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane.

Mrs Prime, 37, who works as a school meals supervisor, was dressed in a light grey suit and a broad brimmed hat with bright blue ribbon.

'Total shock'

She first told of her reaction when Prime confessed to her on April 27 that he had carried out three sexual assaults on young girls.

"It was total shock. I knew nothing about it all," she said. His confession of espionage on the same evening came as an equal shock.

The following morning, Prime confessed to Hereford police about the sex attacks and was taken into custody.

It was three weeks later, while he was in custody, that Mrs Prime discovered her husband's espionage equipment. She took advice from her

Continued on Back P, Col 3

Mrs PRIME

By ALAN COPPS

Continued from Page One

solicitor, doctor and from her parents and all said she should hand over the evidence.

She informed the police first of what she had found and secondly of her husband's confession.

She said: "I took legal advice and I had a choice. I didn't have to do it. But morally I had to go to the authorities and tell them because I could not live as a Christian with that on my conscience and I believe in the end I have done him a favour, and hopefully, the country."

Mr George Carman Q C (defending) asked Mrs Prime how her husband had reacted to the fact that she had provided the prosecution with its evidence.

"He has taken it incredibly well. He has become a changed man—the man I always thought was always underneath."

"He has lost all his burden and is now a new man. Because of the terrible burden he carried for so many years he was incredibly unhappy. He was a tortured personality."

Mrs Prime said her husband was now able to "relate to people" and had made a close friend in prison.

"I believe for the first time Geoffrey Prime has found the goal in his life that he was always seeking," she said.

Mrs Prime, who was later praised by the Lord Chief Justice as "a woman of great character, sympathy and humanity," said her husband had treated her and her three sons with the "utmost respect."

She did not know how he did it while living his "triple life."

He had been a marvellous father to the boys.

"He has worked very hard and brought me to a standard of living I would never have had without him."

Before calling Mrs Prime, as a character witness, Mr Carman said she had received approaches from the national Press offering "enormous sums of money."

But she took the view, as a practising Christian, that it would be immoral to make a profit out of her husband's treachery.

"She expressly asked me to say that after she had given evidence she would very grateful if the Press would leave her and her family alone," he said.

After giving her evidence Mrs Prime returned to her seat at the side of the court and listened as the Lord Chief Justice sentenced her husband.

Then, seconds after he had been led away, to the cells, she collapsed in tears and was helped out of the court by a policewoman.

Some time later, looking calm and composed she left the Old Bailey by a side entrance and was escorted to a taxi by police.

With her was Father Adrian, the parish priest from her local church, who had listened to the trial from the public gallery, and another woman friend.

Later it was learned that she had had a 15-minute meeting with her husband in the cells.

Daily Telegraph
11 NOV '82

'A ruthless operator, says judge

LORD LANE, the Lord Chief Justice, told Prime:

"I have listened to what has been said of your early history and the background of social and sexual isolation which you had, and of course, all this made you an ideal prospect for our potential enemies."

Lord Lane said he had also listened "perhaps more importantly" to what Prime's wife said on his behalf.

"Whatever has come out of this case, your wife has come out of it with great credit. She displays herself as a woman of great character, sympathy and humanity."

He went on: "But the court has heard enough about your activities over at least nine years as I read it, probably longer, to realise that by your treachery you have done incalculable harm to the interests and security of this country and the interests and security of our friends and allies."

No one would ever know for certain what exactly motivated Prime. "It may have been what you have doubtless called ideological reasons."

Lord Lane said he had been



The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane.

asked by Mr Carman not to treat Prime as a ruthless and rationally motivated spy.

"But I am bound to say that it is a description which fits you exactly. Your ruthlessness is demonstrated not only by what you did with this country's secrets, but by what you did to those girls."

"The fact that you were rationally motivated is quite clear on the statements you made to police."

"What your motivation was perhaps doesn't matter. You made the choice and you must suffer the result."

Lord Lane told Prime he was giving him credit for having confessed, for pleading guilty, and for largely providing the material on which the prosecution was based.

"It is said you are anxious to repair the damage you have done. But it is perfectly plain that the huge proportion of it is quite irrevocable."

"You must suffer the result of the choice you have made. The result is to punish you, mark the public abhorrence of the crimes you have committed, and finally to deter others who might toy with the idea of treachery in the future."

"As you gained in stature and promotion in your job, so you became of greater use to the Russians, and that is the basis on which I sentence you."

Prime, of Pitville Crescent, Cheltenham, was jailed for a total of 35 years after he pleaded guilty to the seven spying charges.

He was jailed for a further three years, making a total of 38 years, for the indecent assaults on the three young girls.

AP
29 NOVEMBER 1982

BRITISH SPIES;

FORMER DIPLOMAT PLEADS GUILTY TO PASSING SECRETS; DETAILS
LONDON (AP) - RHONA JANET RITCHIE, A FORMER SECOND SECRETARY AT THE
BRITISH EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV, PLEADED GUILTY TODAY TO PASSING BRITISH
GOVERNMENT SECRETS TO HER LOVER, AN EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL.
MISS RITCHIE, 30, ADMITTED TO ONE COUNT OF WRONGFULLY COMMUNICATING
INFORMATION TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.

IT WAS THE SECOND PROSECUTION UNDER BRITAIN'S OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT
IN THREE WEEKS. ON NOV. 10, GEOFFREY PRIME, A FORMER TRANSLATOR AT THE
TOP-SECRET GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN CHELTENHAM,
PLEADED GUILTY TO CHARGES OF PASSING SECRETS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND
WAS SENTENCED TO 35 YEARS IN PRISON.

BRITISH NEWSPAPERS HEADLINED REPORTS TODAY OF ANOTHER SPY CASE IN
WHICH BRITISH MILITARY SECRETS MAY HAVE BEEN PASSED BY A BRITISH ARMY
SPY RING THROUGH THE SOVIET EMBASSY TO ARGENTINA, BRITAIN'S FOE IN
LAST SPRING'S FALKLAND ISLANDS CONFLICT.

AT A HEARING IN LONDON'S OLD BAILEY CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT, ATTORNEY
GENERAL SIR MICHAEL HAVERS SAID THAT BETWEEN NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR
AND FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR, MISS RITCHIE DISCLOSED THE CONTENTS OF FIVE
SECRET DIPLOMATIC TELEGRAMS TO REFAAT EL-ANSARY, HER COUNTERPART AT
THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY.

SINCE EGYPT HAS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN, "THE DAMAGE TO OUR
COUNTRY'S INTERESTS WAS NOT IN THE EVENT GREAT," HAVERS SAID.
HE DESCRIBED MISS RITCHIE'S ACTIONS AS "MORE FOOLISH THAN WICKED."
ACCORDING TO HAVERS, FOUR OF THE TELEGRAMS - MARKED "CONFIDENTIAL"
- WERE FROM THEN-BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY LORD CARRINGTON TO
THEN-SECRETARY OF STATE ALEXANDER M. HAIG JR. AND ISRAELI OFFICIALS
SAYING BRITAIN WOULD TAKE PART IN A MULTINATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE
IN THE SINAI. THEIR CONTENTS, HAVERS SAID, WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE
BECOME KNOWN.

BUT A FIFTH, WHICH HAVERS SAID WAS THE "MOST SENSITIVE," GAVE
CARRINGTON'S VIEWS ON VARIOUS MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS. ITS CONTENTS WERE
"KNOWN TO WASHINGTON BUT OBVIOUSLY BETTER NOT KNOWN TO OTHERS," THE
PROSECUTOR SAID.

2.

HAYERS SAID THAT WHEN MISS RITCHIE, A FORMER LAW LECTURER AT GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, WAS FIRST INTERROGATED AFTER BEING BROUGHT HOME IN FEBRUARY, SHE ADMITTED GIVING EL-ANSARY THE TELEGRAMS. "IT NEVER ENTERED MY HEAD ON ANY WAY TO BETRAY SECRETS," HE QUOTED HER AS SAYING.

"THIS YOUNG LADY IS NOT AND NEVER HAD BEEN A SPY," HER DEFENSE LAWYER, GEORGE CARMAN, SAID. SHE HAS "SUFFERED GRIEVOUSLY AND RUINED A CAREER OF ENORMOUS PROMISE."

THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE WORD ON A SENTENCE. MEANWHILE, THE DAILY EXPRESS REPORTED THAT "A SPY RING OPERATING IN THE HEART OF THE BRITISH ARMY" MAY HAVE FED FALKLANDS WAR SECRETS TO ARGENTINA VIA THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN LONDON.

29 November 1982

SPY

LONDON (UPI) -- ARMY SECURITY OFFICERS ARRESTED A SOLDIER AT A KEY MILITARY BASE, RAISING FEARS OF A NEW SECURITY BREACH IN BRITAIN'S INTELLIGENCE NETWORK THAT REPORTEDLY ALLOWED FALKLANDS WAR SECRETS TO BE PASSED TO ARGENTINA.

THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE SAID SUNDAY A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER IN THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS HAD BEEN DETAINED AT ALBERSHOT, ONE OF BRITAIN'S LARGEST ARMY BASES, AND CHARGED WITH "IMPROPERLY CARRYING OUT HIS DUTIES."

BUT IT WOULD NOT CONFIRM NEWS REPORTS THE UNIDENTIFIED DETAINEE WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE VISITED THE SOVIET EMBASSY "POSSIBLY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS" AND HAD BEEN QUESTIONED FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS BY ARMY CHIEFS AND SECURITY SERVICES.

THE NEWS BROKE AS SECURITY CHIEFS BRACED THEMSELVES FOR FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT IN TWO MORE SPY CASES DUE TO COME TO COURT MONDAY.

RHONA RITCHIE, 29, A FORMER FIRST SECRETARY AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV WAS APPEARING AT THE OLD BAILEY COURT IN LONDON CHARGED WITH PASSING SECRETS TO A FOREIGN POWER.

IN AN UNRELATED CASE, PROF. HUGH HANBLETON, A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND FORMER INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, IS DUE TO APPEAR AT THE SAME COURT ON A SIMILAR CHARGE OF PASSING INFORMATION TO A FOREIGN POWER.

THREE WEEKS AGO, RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE SPECIALIST GEOFFREY PRINE, WHO WORKED AT THE GOVERNMENT'S TOP-SECRET CHELTENHAM COMMUNICATIONS CENTER, WAS JAILED FOR 38 YEARS ON CHARGES OF SPYING FOR MOSCOW OVER 14 YEARS AND INDECENCY.

DESPITE SEVERAL SECURITY CHECKS, PRINE'S ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES WENT UNDETECTED UNTIL POLICE PICKED HIM UP FOR SEXUAL ATTACKS ON YOUNG GIRLS.

THE DEFENSE SPOKESMAN SAID OF THE SOLDIER'S ARREST: "THE MAN HAS BEEN CHARGED UNDER SECTION 69 OF THE ARMY ACT WHICH SPECIFICALLY REFERS TO CONDUCT PREJUDICIAL TO GOOD ORDER AND MILITARY DISCIPLINE."

CONTINUED

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THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, NOTED FOR ITS CONTACTS WITH SECURITY CHIEFS, SAID THE MINISTRY'S REFUSAL TO NAME THE UNIT IN WHICH THE MAN WAS SERVING INDICATED A SECURITY BREACH WAS INVOLVED.

"THE SOLDIER INVOLVED IS A LANCE CORPORAL AND IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN UNDER QUESTIONING BY ARMY POLICE AND THE SECURITY SERVICES FOR TWO WEEKS," IT SAID.

"IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE MAN HAS VISITED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN LONDON, POSSIBLY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS."

OTHER NEWSPAPERS SAID THE SOLDIER WAS SUSPECTED OF PASSING INFORMATION ABOUT WEAPONS PERFORMANCE IN THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT EARLIER THIS YEAR AND MAY EVEN HAVE GIVEN SECRETS TO THE SOVIETS FOR RELAY TO ARGENTINA DURING THE FIGHTING.

Brit spy scandal highlights shortcomings in security

London (UPI)—For the 16th time since World War II, Britain has been hit by a spy scandal—one that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher admits also damaged the United States and other Western allies.

But soon after Geoffrey Prime was sent to prison for 35 years for passing secrets to the Soviet Union over 14 years, there were signs that Washington and London were prepared to kiss and make up.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said that, while the Prime case was damaging to U.S. security interests, it was "not a disaster."

The spy caper again turned the spotlight on what many have long believed to be a leaky London connection in the West's battle of wits with the Soviet Union.

PRIME, 44, SERVED in the Royal Air Force and later in the govern-

ment's secret electronic intelligence center at Cheltenham.

America's National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md., works closely with Cheltenham. Initial U.S. intelligence reaction to Soviet "penetration" of the center was shock and dismay.

In Britain, where even the existence of a secret service has never been officially acknowledged, nothing has emerged on what Prime actually told his Soviet paymasters.

Thatcher assured Parliament—and Washington—that Prime had no access to Western military or nuclear secrets.

But Prime's job as a Russian-language expert gave him access, until 1977, to classified intelligence material from British and American listening posts around the world.

HE DID NOT HAVE access to all of Cheltenham's information. But what he did see enabled him to identify for the

Russians the main targets of British and U.S. monitors.

This allowed Moscow to change codes and radio frequencies. What's more, the Russians could spew out "disinformation" designed to mislead the West.

The case once more highlighted shortcomings in the British system of security clearance. Prime had come through at least three "positive" screenings—clearly, the procedures did not work. In the end, he was unmasked by accident.

A sexual obsession with girls aged 10 to 15—undetected in the security checks—led to his undoing. Police traced him from a description of his car after his third offense against a child.

Prime confessed all to his second wife, Rhona, 37. She told police. In addition to Prime's card-index list of 2,287 young girls, police found all the equipment of a professional spy at his home.

Prime confessed to police he made the first approach to Moscow while with the RAF in West Berlin and twice nearly defected via Helsinki.

Thatcher said she has ordered a sweeping review of security procedures.



Geoffrey Prime—part of a leaky London connection?

THE WASHINGTON POST
28 NOVEMBER 1982

D C D

Virginia L. Thorne, Retired CIA Employee

Virginia L. Thorne, 73, an employee of the Central Intelligence Agency from its inception in 1947 until her retirement in 1972, died of respiratory failure Nov. 25 at Sibley Memorial Hospital.

Mrs. Thorne, who lived in Washington, was born in Syracuse, N.Y. She moved here in 1942 and worked for the wartime Office of Price Administration until she joined the CIA.

She was a member of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, Accuracy In Media, the Capt. Joseph Magruder Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the English-Speaking Union and the 16th Street Women's Literary Club.

Her husband, Robert A. Thorne, died in 1936.

Survivors include a sister, Frances M. Lewis, of Alexandria.

TASTE FOR LITTLE GIRLS DOWNFALL OF SPY CENTRE MOLE

By IAN HENRY *Old Bailey Correspondent*

GEOFFREY PRIME, 44, a former employee of the Government's secret communications headquarters at Cheltenham, jailed yesterday for spying for the Russians, was only caught because of his taste for sex with little girls.

After he confessed to three sex attacks police searched his home and discovered "material which suggested he was involved in activities even more grave," said Sir MICHAEL HAVERS, Q.C., Attorney-General, prosecuting, at the Old Bailey.

In his wallet, they found a code-pad, a document explaining how to handle micro-dots, details of radio frequencies, and a top secret memorandum.

The police also took possession of a powerful radio, two recording tapes, a black briefcase, a carrier bag containing notebooks, and 26 envelopes pre-addressed to East Berlin.

Sir Michael said that in the course of Prime's employment, both in the R.A.F. and in the Government service, he came to have access to information ranging from the simply sensitive to matters of the "very highest" secrecy.

Over a period of 15 years he had admitted passing secrets

Editorial Comment—P18

in Berlin, Vienna, Potsdam and London that had caused "exceptional grave damage."

At one stage, the Press and public were excluded for 20 minutes while Sir Michael told the court, in camera, "the deep gravity of what Prime did."

Before doing so, Sir Michael said: "There has been much wild speculation, most of which is unsupported by the evidence about the nature of the damage for which he is responsible, especially in relation to nuclear warheads and endangering the lives of agents."

"I repeat there is no evidence to support speculations of this kind."

Spying and sex charges

PRIME faced seven spying charges under Section One of the Official Secrets Act.

They were, that for purposes prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State, he communicated information which was calculated to be, might be, or was intended to be, directly or indirectly useful to an enemy:

In Berlin, between Dec. 31, 1967, and Aug. 1968;

Between Sept. 30, 1968 and April 29, 1982;

Between May 1-31, 1970, in Abbey Wood, London;

In Vienna, between Sept. 1-30, 1975;

In Vienna, between May 1-31, 1976;

In Vienna, between May 1-31, 1980;

And in Potsdam, East Germany, between Nov. 1-30, 1981.

Prime also faced three charges of indecently assaulting girls on April 10, 1980; on May 28, 1981, and on April 21, 1982.

Reporting of their names was prohibited by an order under Section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act.

Secret compartment

in brief case

Prime was first interviewed about his espionage activities in June this year, but he simply told police: "I don't know where you got that information from, but that certainly isn't true, I can assure you."

But he was later more forthcoming. During four hours of questioning he admitted receiving £2,000 from the Russians, but claimed he never got any further than considering working for them.

At a later interview he explained that in September 1977

he had booked flights to Helsinki on two occasions with a view to living in Russia, but his regard for his wife and her children prevented him from going through with the plan.

During that interview with the police, Prime said that in 1974 he had been given, via his sister, a briefcase with a secret compartment containing spying equipment.

The plain black briefcase and its secret compartment were produced in court and the method of opening it, removing two screws in the handle, was demonstrated.

Prime was interviewed twice more, said Sir Michael, but he repeated his denials. Then, there was a "dramatic change."

Suddenly, he told two officers: "Yes, at 4 o'clock today June 26, 1982, I now wish to tell you the whole truth of this tragic affair. I cannot go on talking about my wife whilst I am continuing to tell lies."

"It will take a long time, could we have a short break, then I'll start from January 1968, when this affair started."

The statement which followed was so long it was taken over two days.

Handed a note

at checkpoint

The salient features, which emerged, were that his first contact with Russian agents was not in 1974, but in January, 1968, when he was stationed in Berlin.

"According to that statement Prime began to feel sympathy for the Soviet regime in the mid-60s, and when returning from leave handed a note to a Soviet officer manning a checkpoint into West Berlin indicating that he wished to make contact."

Later he found a metallic cylinder attached to the door of his car. It contained a note directing him to Friedrichstrasse station, where he was met by Russian agents. He explained that he wanted to give them any information they wanted.

"Thereafter Prime met his contacts Igor and Valya regularly until July 1968 when he left the R A F. He told them the nature of his work and revealed all the information which was available to him."

"He used a miniature camera to photograph R A F Gatow's telephone directory and delivered photographs together with a sample of classified material to his Russian controller."

"Prime told his controller that he was thinking of applying for employment as a linguist in the Civil Service and was encouraged to pursue his application."

"He returned to England in July 1968, and was successful in his job application being told to report for duty in London on Sept. 30, 1968"

"Before starting work he returned to East Berlin and received extensive training in the arts of the spy. He was taught the method of secret writing which allows invisible messages in code to be over-written on seemingly innocuous letters."

"He was taught how to use a miniature camera for photographing documents. He was taught how to receive coded radio transmissions and how to receive and handle microdots. He was told the dead letter box procedure for conveying information."

When Prime returned to England he brought with him the briefcase containing the

code pads for deciphering messages sent to him by radio, and to encipher messages sent back to the Russians; secret writing paper on which to write encoded messages; East Germany addressed envelopes to carry the secret messages in invisible code; and £400 sterling.

He was given the codename Rowlands and a password to be used when meeting contacts. In reply to the contact saying: "I believe we met in Pittsburgh in 1968," Prime was to reply: "No, at that time I was in Berlin."

Sir Michael continued: "Once he started work in London, Prime regularly conveyed information to the Russians and received information from them usually by radio.

In autumn 1969, he was told by radio message to go to a secret hiding place in Esher, near a lake. He went, and received a few hundred pounds in sterling and a letter congratulating him on his progress.

"In May 1970, he took photographs of documents, which he had taken with the miniature camera, to Abbey Wood in London and left them at a secret hiding place in a wood.

"In the summer of 1971, he collected more money and more spying materials at a pick-up point near Banstead Station in Surrey.

Lost his code pads

"In 1972 or 1973, he mislaid his one-time pads (code pads) and was forced to send a letter to East Germany in invisible writing, in plain text, explaining the loss.

"According to Prime contact was lost until 1974, when Soviet agents left a briefcase at his sister's home. This part of Prime's statement is confirmed by his sister who remembers a man and a woman who spoke in broken English delivering a parcel.

"She opened the parcel and saw the briefcase which was apparently empty. In fact it was the replica of the briefcase Prime had been given in August 1968, and had spying equipment and £400 in the secret compartment.

"In the spring of 1975, whilst still in London, Prime was given a briefing by his employers in order to receive and understand fresh material of a higher security classification. He reported immediately to his controller in East Berlin.

"His controller arranged a series of meetings in Vienna which took place in September 1975. Prime took with him photographic copies of highly secret material and microfiche cards of an equally sensitive nature. He received £700 or £800 in sterling.

"Prime flew to Vienna again in May 1976. Between September 1975 and May 1976 he had been regularly sending details of top secret information. He took with him in May 1976 more photographed documents he had had access to whilst in London, and explained the nature of his new job at Chatham.

Promised pension and rank of colonel.

"He had, in fact, been transferred from London to Cheltenham in March 1976. At one of the meetings in Vienna in May 1976, Prime was informed that should he ever wish to defect he would be given a pension and the rank of Colonel. He was given £1,000 before he returned to England.

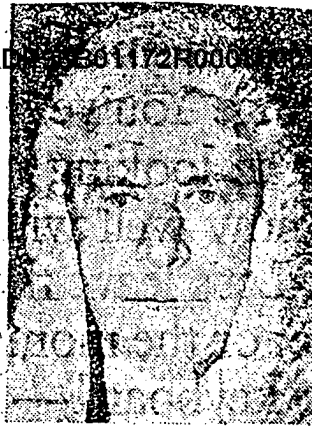
"Prime was promoted in 1976, and on the first of November 1976 he became section head, which gave him access to a wider and even more secret range of material.

"As a section head he regularly attended meetings at which matters of the utmost secrecy were discussed.

"Between his return from Vienna in May 1976 and his resignation on Sept. 28, 1977, Prime took 15 rolls of film amounting to about 500 photographs of top secret documents.

"Prime claimed that by September 1977, the pressure of living a double life got too much for him. He had married in June 1977 and taken over the care of his new wife's three children.

"He decided to defect by flying to Helsinki, and indeed booked flights on Sept. 11 and



✓ Sir Michael Havers, Q.C.

Sept. 20, but on each occasion did not go through with it.

"According to Prime he had no further contact with Russian agents until he was telephoned in April, 1980, and asked to go to Vienna.

"He flew there on May 16 1980, taking with him the 15 rolls of film of top secret documents, together with handwritten notes.

Debriefed on cruise ship

"He was taken to a Russian cruise ship on the Danube for two or three days and questioned at length about the material he had brought with him. He was given £600 and flew back to England.

"In October, Prime claimed that he was again contacted by telephone and agreed to go to Berlin for a further meeting. He flew to Berlin on Nov. 16 and was taken to Potsdam in East Germany where he was closely questioned about Allied activities which were top secret.

"When the debriefing was finished he was given £4,000 and taken back to Berlin.

"Prime indicated that the one time pads and the secret writing pads which the police had seized were given to him either in Vienna in 1980 or at Potsdam in 1981.

"He claimed he had not used any of them, nor had he had any further contact with Russian agents."

Sir Michael said Prime ended his statement saying: "Looking back over the entire period I deeply regret the extent of the betrayal manifested by my activities, which were in breach of the trust placed in me by my Government."

"I believe that I first embarked on these activities partly as a result of a misplaced idealistic view of Soviet socialism which was compounded by basic psychological problems within myself.

"These problems had made me susceptible to the type of propaganda which I became aware of during my service in West Berlin.

"I am also deeply ashamed and find it difficult to express my remorse in words in relation which I have caused for my wife and family."

Police investigation

'masterly'

Before requesting the court to go into camera, Sir Michael paid tribute to the officers of West Mercia police who interviewed Prime.

"The responsible services have nothing but praise for the masterly way in which Det. Chief Supt. David Cole, Det. Chief Insp. Peter Picken and police officers under them coped with what is the gravest investigation they will ever be likely to undertake. In an unfamiliar field, they worked with remarkable diligence and very great care."

Lord LANE, Lord Chief Justice, interrupted by asking the Attorney-General: "The information this man gave became more and more important and dangerous to the services of this country. Is that true?"

Sir Michael agreed that it became more true as Prime's spying career continued.

Earlier the Attorney-General said it was clear from the charges, and from Prime himself, he was sexually attracted towards girls in the 10 to 15 age bracket.

"Over a number of years, he built up a card index system of young girls. His main sources of information were newspapers from the Hereford and Gloucester area.

"From newspapers he was able to find out the names of the girl, the names of her parents and sometimes the home telephone number.

"Armed with this informa-



Mr George Carman, Q.C.

tion it was then his practice to telephone the girl and engage her in conversation as to her age, which school she attended, and when her parents were likely to be out of the house.

"He maintained his index system, logging every call he made with details of who answered the telephone and if it was the girl, details of what their conversation had been about, and what name he had used when making the call."

At the time of his arrest, Prime gave police 2,287 index cards for such girls.

But Prime only visited the homes of his victims on four occasions. One visit in March 1982 to the home of a girl near Worcester was abortive because when he got to the house he found a cleaning lady there.

The first time, he actually got into his victim's home was in April, 1980. Prime telephoned the home of an 11-year-old Gloucestershire girl and spoke to her about her family and school. He rang again 10 minutes later and asked to visit the house to do some plumbing.

He arrived five minutes later and the girl showed him the loft. He pulled a hood of striped pyjama material over his head, placed his hand over her mouth and told her to lie down. When she got up, he said: "Lie down or I'll do something to you."

After Prime said he wanted to look up her skirt, he was disturbed by a market researcher knocking at the door, and left hurriedly.

His second victim was a 13-year-old Worcestershire girl. He again telephoned the girl, knowing her parents both worked, this time posing as a painter and decorator.

After pretending to examine the house, he asked to take a photograph of her on the pretext that he had once been her baby-sitter. But the girl refused.

She noticed through a door that he was tying a handkerchief over his face. He seized her by the neck and said "if you co-operate with me you won't get hurt."

He twisted her arm behind her back and pushed her into a bedroom. She asked to go to the bathroom, where she opened a window and tried to call for help.

Prime threw her into the bath, putting his hands over her face and later around her neck. She was ordered to take off her jeans and sit on the floor and expose herself.

The third victim was a 14-year-old girl living near Hereford, when, in April this year, he again telephoned asking to do some painting estimates.

Once at her home he threatened the girl with a bottle opener with a knife blade. She was ordered to pull her pants down and lift up her skirt, but after she began screaming Prime fled, but not before asking if she knew any other girls on their own.

Sir Michael said Prime's distinctively coloured Cortina car had been spotted at the scene of the Hereford incident, and when police began questioning all Cortina owners, Prime denied any knowledge of the incident, claiming he had been at home at the time.

"It seems that after the police left his home he confessed to his wife that he was responsible, for the next day he telephoned Hereford police station and admitted he was the man police were looking for."

When the court came out of camera Mr George Carman, Q.C. defence counsel, told the Lord Chief Justice:

"My client may now be able to see that a civilised system of justice affords him the right to be properly defended in a country whose interests he has damaged, whereas the irony of the case is that the country

Continued from P10

whose interests he sought to serve would have denied him such rights."

Dealing with what he described as matters of the "greatest public importance," Mr Carman emphasised that Prime's espionage activities were conducted by him in collusion with the Russian Intelligence services alone.

No other colleague at GCHQ, or indeed any other citizen of Britain or any Western power was in any way involved, directly or indirectly in his activities.

"Having betrayed his country and confessed his guilt freely, he expressly authorises me to state that he is anxious to co-operate after sentence with the authorities in furnishing any further information that he possibly can in any subsequent interviews that may be sought, so that the task of repairing the damage should be continued."

"So much for public matters. A matter of private concern, but no less important in your lordship's court, is the utter shame and profound remorse that he would wish me to express to the children concerned and to their parents."

'What kind of man is he?'

Mr Carman said that if one stood back with horror at the offences, in order to take a close look at the offender, one asked the question: "What kind of man is Geoffrey Prime?"

Two phrases told it all— "desperately lonely and totally inadequate," and "a sexual and social misfit."

"It is the misfits of society that provide the fertile breeding ground for the ruthless propaganda of the Soviet system and its capacity to foster treachery under the guise of idealism."

Mr Carman said a cynic might add "perfectly wicked," and one had to concede that to be true in terms of Prime's conduct.

"But it is not the key to understanding the man himself," he said.

At 30 years of age, Prime had betrayed his country while serving in the RAF, at the beginning of 1968.

"That was a considered decision. One naturally asks how and why did he reach that decision," said Mr Carman.

When one looked back, the picture that was presented of Prime was of an unhappy and unfortunate childhood, where he had been deprived of parental love. His parents' marriage was unhappy and he himself was the victim of a sexual assault by an adult relative.

When Prime joined the RAF he was already encountering

serious sexual problems. His mother died that year and his father when he was 25.

"What your lordship does not already know is that in 1972, whilst employed on work of a sensitive nature, he was referred by his general practitioner to a consultant psychiatrist for severe depression."

Mr Carman described Prime's unhappy and unfortunate background, his sexual maladjustment and social isolation which, he said had led to his position.

"When he was in the RAF in Berlin, he lost his parents and religious belief. He was sexually inadequate. In his own words: 'I needed to believe in something'."

"He started to listen to Russian broadcasts and read Russian literature. He was, in his mind, converted to the cause at that time."

In the following nine years, said Mr Carman, Prime had "clung" to the idea that he had made the right decision.

"But they were nine years also where his doubts began to torment him with ever increasing intensity."

End of marriage

'the watershed'

Prime married in 1969, but the marriage failed in 1972. He had ~~psychiatric treatment during this period for depression~~. The watershed came when he left his wife.

Then Prime met his present wife and went to lodge at her home. "She had a tragic marriage with three young sons. Prime married her in the summer of 1977 and then voluntarily and very abruptly resigned his post at Cheltenham in September of that year."

"The pressure which built up in him caused him to resign and consider taking steps to defect to the Soviet Union twice."

Mr Carman invited Lord Lane not to consider Prime as a totally ruthless and rationally motivated spy. He pointed out that he had an opportunity to defect to the Soviet Union when he resigned from Cheltenham and failed to do so.

Also, unlike some of the major post-war spies including Philby, Burgess and Maclean, there was not in Prime's case any pre-arranged escape plan or route with the Russians.

He had no false passport and every trip abroad was carried out using his real passport.

Lord Lane intervened: "Did he really need one?"

Mr Carman replied: "If he went to places like Vienna, it may have been likely for the Russians to have provided him with a false passport."

Mr Carman said the final reason for not treating Prime as

a ruthless traitor was that when he was arrested and interviewed about the sex offences on April 27 this year, "a critical date in this case," he then freely, within a few hours confessed two things to his wife.

Ignored chance

to defect

He told her he was guilty of grave sexual misconduct; more startlingly, he told her he had been engaged in spying.

When he knew he was a police suspect for serious sexual offences, he had a passport, money and a car, and could have defected from this country. But he did not, said counsel.

"For on that day, and for the remaining three weeks, the authorities were totally unaware the man suspected of sexual activities was also a spy."

"This man was not a potentially ruthless and not a totally rationally motivated spy."

He confessed to his wife on the evening of April 27, and the following day telephoned the police admitting the sexual offences. In the intervening three weeks Mrs Prime agonised with herself what she should do.

In the meantime, she found a carrier bag containing spy equipment and a wallet containing documents under a bed. She took advice from her solicitor, from her doctor and from her parents, all of whom advised her that the matter should be reported.

Mr Carman said Prime had lied to police because he knew that even if he was imprisoned for the sexual offences, any term would leave him a lifeline to see his wife and stepchildren eventually.

Prime had described in great detail his recruitment and training by the Russians, and had also described the Russian Intelligence service to police.

He had told quite voluntarily of the payments he had received and the times on which the Russians had made contact.

"He gave the British authorities every possible co-operation in enabling them to try to understand the gravity of what he had done and assess the damage that he had perpetrated."

Mr Carman added: "His paymasters did not think so highly of him that they had arranged for his escape."

Again Lord Lane interrupted, saying: "He was much more valuable here."

Counsel said Prime had no access to fresh information from the autumn of 1977 when he left Cheltenham. Although he went to Potsdam in 1981 and was interviewed by Russian

Intelligence, they were technical questions, and he was unable to help them.

"Persistent attempts were made by the Russians to encourage him to try to rejoin the Government services at Cheltenham or the Army. They even tried to persuade him to try to join the Security Services. But once having made the decision to resign, he made absolutely no effort to rejoin again."

Mrs Rhona Prime, 37, who went to police as a matter of conscience, told the court: "I took legal advice and I had a choice, I didn't have to do it."

"But morally I had to go to the authorities and tell them, because I could not live as a Christian with that on my conscience, or my husband's conscience. And I believe, in the end, I have done him a favour, and hopefully the country."

Prime looked visibly stunned as Lord Lane sentenced him to a total of 38 years in prison.

Daily Telegraph
11 NOV 82

'Incalculable harm' to Allies

35 YEARS FOR MASTER SPY

Confession led wife to give him up

By ALAN COPPS

GEOFFREY PRIME, a "ruthless and rationally-motivated spy" in the words of Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, was jailed for 35 years at the Old Bailey yesterday for 14 years of treachery that caused "incalculable harm" to Britain and her allies.



Geoffrey Arthur Prime in custody in July.

Approved For Release 2005/08/03 : CIA-RDP96B01172R000300020002-6

Prime, a former linguist at the Government's top secret code cracking and communications centre in Cheltenham, lived a triple life—as a spy for Russia, as a devoted step-father, and as a sexual and social misfit.

It was his lust for young girls that led to his downfall. After being arrested on sex charges he confessed to his second wife, Rhona, that he was also an agent for Russia.

She found his spying equipment in a plastic bag under a bed at their home in Cheltenham and, after three weeks of agonising, told the police.

Prime, 44, had the full paraphernalia of espionage.

It included a miniature camera to photograph documents, special writing paper to carry coded messages, a powerful radio to receive coded transmissions and a tape recorder to help decipher them.

Prime was also given "one time pads" on which he could decipher coded radio messages and encypher his replies, and envelopes pre-addressed to East Berlin to carry messages in invisible code. All this was contained in a brief case with a false bottom.

Codename 'Rowlands'

His controllers, known as Igor and Valva, gave him the code-name 'Rowlands' and a password.

His contact would say: "I believe we met in Pittsburgh in 1968."

Prime was to reply: "No, at that time I was in Berlin."

He had been taught how to receive and handle microdot communications and was given training in East Berlin in the dead-letter box procedure.

Throughout his spy career he sent regular details of top-secret documents.

His meeting with his masters took him to East Berlin, Vienna, once to a Russian cruise boat on the Danube, and to Potsdam in East Germany.

But when it came to explaining the material that Prime passed to his Russian spy-masters at those meetings and its potential damage to Western security, the No. 1 court at the Old Bailey sat in camera.

The case of Prime, who worked for nearly 10 years at the Government communication headquarters in London and Cheltenham, has already caused fears about a rift between British and United States intelligence agencies.

Mr. Thatcher is to make a statement about the case in the Commons today and she is certain to face fierce questioning from MPs demanding to know how the Prime Minister passed the positive vetting procedure designed to weed-out potential security risks.

Approved For Release 2005/08/03 : CIA-RDP96B01172R000300020002-6

£7,000 pay

During his years as a K G B agent Prime collected more than £7,000 from his paymasters.

In 1976, when his career both at the communications H Q and in the K G B was at its height, his controller informed him that if he ever wished to defect he would be given a pension and the rank of colonel.

Prime pleaded guilty at the Old Bailey to seven counts under the Official Secrets Act of communicating information useful to an enemy. He also admitted three charges of indecently assaulting young girls, for which he was jailed for three years.

Now a broken and remorseful man, who appeared drawn and weary as he sat in the dock, Prime has promised to co-operate fully with the security services to repair whatever he can of the damage he caused. But much of it is irreparable.

In a 30-page confession, Prime said he first offered his services to the K G B while serving with the R A F in Berlin in 1963 "partly as a result of a misplaced idealistic view

of Soviet socialism which was compounded by basic psychological problems within myself."

When they question Mrs Thatcher today, MPs will also want to know why there was no inquiry after Prime, tiring of his life of deception, suddenly left the communications H Q in 1977, even though by that time he had risen to be a section head dealing with decisions "of the utmost secrecy".

In the event, Prime was questioned about espionage only after Mrs Prime had seen the police while her husband was in custody for sex assaults against young girls.

Prime, said yesterday, by Mr George Carman Q.C. defending, to have had an unhappy childhood which made him a "sexual and social misfit," first made contact with the K G B after leaving a message at a Berlin checkpoint in 1968.

The reply came in a metal cylinder attached to his car.

He met his contacts, Igor and Valya, at the Friedrichstrasse station, gave them information, and was encouraged by them to pursue his application for a job as a linguist in the Civil Service.

His application was successful and after passing the positive vetting procedure he began working for the Government's communications H Q in London.

During that time he received and conveyed information to Russia by radio, picked up money and spying materials and left documents at dead-letter boxes in the London suburbs.

As his seniority in the Civil Service increased he was transferred to Cheltenham and he made more contacts with the

In his last year at Cheltenham he took 15 rolls of film amounting to about 500 photographs of top secret documents.

But a year after marrying his present wife in 1976 and playing the part of a loving father to her three sons he tired of deception and left his Government job.

Twice he booked flights to Helsinki with the intention of defecting, but each time the pull of his new family held him back. He turned to a new life as a taxi driver.

But he still had information the Russians wanted and twice more they contacted him.

He flew to Vienna to deliver his films of documents and last year, on his final contact with his spymasters, he flew to Berlin and was taken to Potsdam to be questioned about top secret allied activities.

It was during his time as a taxi driver that he carried out a series of sex attacks and drew a card index of 2,287 potential young victims.

He was arrested on April 28 and first questioned about spying on June 8. At first he made a series of confusing denials and partial admissions.

But on June 26, after long questioning by Det. Chief Supt David Cole, he made a full confession which ended with words of regret and remorse.

Mr Carman asked Lord Lane not to pass the "maximum kind of sentence for the worst possible sort of traitor" albeit the damage inflicted by Prime was of a very grave order.

He said Prime had co-operated with the authorities to enable them to isolate, detect and hopefully arrest the damage at the earliest possible moment after detection.

There had been several long gaps in Prime's activities over the years, Mr Carman added.

Prime was "desperately lonely and totally inadequate."

Wife praised

"It is the misfits of society that provide the fertile breeding ground for the ruthless propaganda of the Soviet system and its capacity to foster treachery under the guise of idealism," he said.

Passing sentence Lord Lane told Prime: "Whatever has come out of this case, your wife has come out of it with great credit.

"But the court has heard enough about your activities . . . to realise that by your treachery you have done incalculable harm to the interests and security of this country and the interests and security of our friends and allies."

Daily Telegraph
11 NOV 82

THATCHER STATEMENT TODAY

By JAMES WIGHTMAN
Political Correspondent

THE Prime Minister, who will make a statement to the Commons this afternoon on the Geoffrey Prime spy case, is expected to tell MPs that the case is being referred to the Security Commission which investigates major breaches of the intelligence system.

She is also expected to say that no-one else was involved with Prime.

Although this Government faces the immediate political embarrassment, Prime did most of his espionage in the years of other administrations.

He began by supplying the Russians with secrets in the lifetime of the Labour Government led by Sir Harold Wilson, and continued through the years of the administrations led by Mr Heath, Sir Harold Wilson again, then Mr Callaghan and finally Mrs Thatcher.

The immediate concern of the Government once Prime's spying was uncovered was over the potential damage which it had done to national security.

Ministers were dismayed that his spying had gone on undetected for so long and the case shook their confidence in security at the top secret signals centre at Cheltenham, where Prime worked.

Daily Telegraph
11 NOV. 82

CONGRESS CURB ON SHARING SECRETS FEARED

By DAVID SHEARS in Washington

SENIOR Central Intelligence Agency officials are worried that Congress might seize on the Cheltenham security breach to impose tighter surveillance of their work and curb the sharing of American secrets with Britain.

Professionals in the Washington intelligence community view the Prime case as serious, but nobody believes that the Cheltenham "mole" betrayed military secrets such as the location of Nato nuclear warheads or the state of readiness of every Nato division.

"It is most unlikely that he would have had access to anything of the sort," said Mr George Carver, a retired CIA deputy.

Mr Carver, now working as a senior fellow of the Georgetown University Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said that although he had no direct knowledge of Prime's "leaks" to the Russians, the case was certainly less damaging than, for example, the Philby defection.

Washington sources who cannot be named say the kind of Russian messages and signals that would have crossed Prime's desk were less than "cosmic" in their security classification.

Typical of the material Prime was given to translate would have been coded military signals passing between Russian army units. Much of this would have been routine traffic.

Mr Carver said that Prime would not necessarily have known how this material had been obtained, but the very fact that he had it must have been of great interest to his Soviet "case officer" or local spymaster.

By examining the messages Prime was translating, the K G B would have been able to determine which of their codes had been broken. This in turn would have enabled Moscow to attempt "disinformation" — the deliberate feeding of misleading material to the West.

Mr Carver suggested that Prime might have been useful to his Russian masters by telling them which of the messages he handled had aroused particular interest among his superiors.

"This would have given the Soviets an indication of the lines of inquiry Western intelligence was pursuing at any given moment," he said.

Carter ruling

A recent WASHINGTON Post report that Nato military secrets had been betrayed was not taken seriously by the Washington intelligence agencies, but CIA chiefs fear that it might prompt Congress to enforce President Carter's 1978 order requiring tighter Congressional surveillance of their activities.

When this order was issued, the CIA felt its secrets were no longer protected since they might "leak" from briefings on Capitol Hill. London, therefore, hesitated to pass on some British intelligence material.

In the wake of the Prime case, CIA officials fear that some senators will try to restrict the two-way flow of intelligence between America and Britain for fear of betrayal.

Already it is said that some staff assistants of the Senate Intelligence Committee are "snapping at the heels" of Mr William Casey, the CIA Director.

So far these fears have not materialised.

Intelligence professionals on both sides say that Anglo-American co-operation continues unchanged and, in the words of one, "as comfortable as can be."

11 NOV '82

All the tools of the trade

THE KGB, Prime's paymasters, provided their GCHQ mole with an array of spying equipment.

In a nutshell, according to Sir Michael Havers, Attorney-General, Prime was equipped with "all the indispensable tools of the modern-day spy."

In 1974, two Russian agents, a man and a woman speaking in broken English, delivered to Prime's sister a briefcase for him.

Inside was a secret compartment, and when Prime removed the two screws securing the handle, he found a collection of vital equipment.

The Russians also provided him with one time pads, used worldwide by security services for sending and receiving secretly coded messages.

A document found at his home fully explained the usual method of retrieving and developing microdots, which are a well known method of conveying secret information.

Prime also had a signal schedule describing days, times and frequencies when radio contact could be made with him.

Speech in German

Prime, as head of his GCHQ section, had access to highly classified documents. A verbatim copy of one top secret document was found at his home.

He was provided with a powerful radio, capable of receiving in England short wave radio messages from East Germany.

A tape, still on a recorder, contained highly sensitive information in Prime's voice. Another tape recording con-

tained a speech in German, a coded speech which had been broadcast in East Germany in 1970.

Prime also had a notebook with indecipherable indentations which he admitted contained secret carbons.

A brown loose leaf folder also had indentations which were coded numbers.

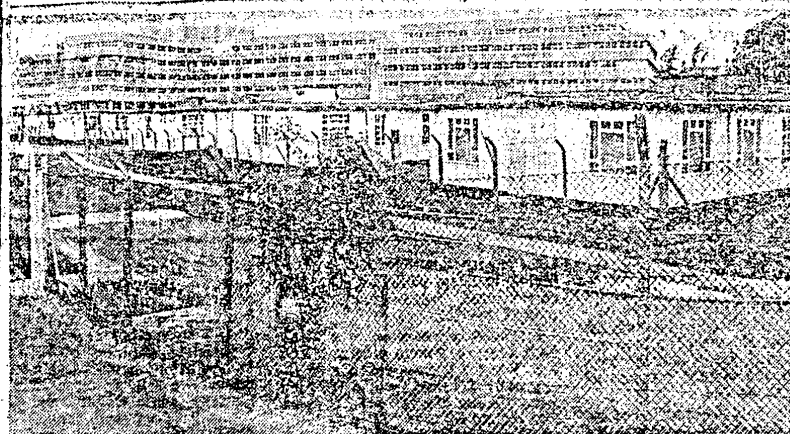
There were letters in envelopes addressed to East Germany. Their content was innocuous, but Prime admitted that invisible writing in code was overwritten on letters of that type, and sent by him to East Germany.

After his arrest, Prime claimed that a miniature camera and a further set of one time pads were still at his home, in the attic, but a thorough search by police failed to discover them.



PICTURE: KENNETH MASON

Mr R. W. Cozens (left), chief constable of West Mercia, Det. Chief Insp. Peter Picken (centre) and Det. Supt. Alan Mayo in London yesterday, after Prime was sentenced, with equipment found at his home; tape recorder, radio receiver, document case (left) with false bottom, one-time-use code pads, (right), letters and an index of young girls.



The Government communications headquarters at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

How he slipped through the net

GEOFFREY PRIME'S incredible secret life was allowed to continue for 14 years because he twice survived positive vetting — the procedure designed to protect against infiltration.

When she makes her Commons statement on the case today Mrs Thatcher is certain to face the fiercest demands yet for a thorough review of the system.

Only earlier this year the latest security review reported that positive vetting had worked well over the past 30 years and recommended a reduction in the number of senior posts subject to the procedure.

Yet in his confession, Prime admitted that he first felt the psychological problems which led him to become a Soviet agent when he was serving with the RAF in Berlin.

Neither that feeling nor the fact that a sexual attack by a male relative during his unhappy childhood had left him with feelings of sexual inadequacy prevented him from passing the positive vetting procedure when he joined GCHQ in 1968.

Mr George Carman revealed at the Old Bailey that in 1972 while engaged on sensitive work in London, Prime suffered from severe depression and was referred by his doctor for treatment by a consultant psychiatrist.

Sudden decision

Yet again in 1974 he passed positive vetting.

MPs will also want to know why no investigation was prompted by his sudden decision to quit GCHQ in 1977, just a year after being promoted to the rank of section head, in which he dealt with matters of the utmost secrecy.

A process of de-indoctrination and de-briefing is supposed to be standard procedure when such a senior employee leaves Cheltenham.

It was the psychological weakness and feeling of sexual inadequacy which first led him to make contact with his Soviet spymasters and later to make the sexual attacks on little girls that brought about his downfall.

Yet it is just such dangerous weaknesses that the vetting system was designed to show up.

Ministers are already considering whether the vetting system should be changed. This follows a report from Lord Bridge, chairman of the Security Commission, who inquired into the case of Commander Michael Trestrail, the Queen's Police Officer who resigned in July after admitting a relationship with a male prostitute.

That report, together with any recommended improvements, may be published later this month.

The vetting system at Cheltenham, as at any other civil service establishment works on two basic levels. The "normal vetting" applied to those dealing with information up to the "confidential" level relies principally upon the information an individual gives when first employed, backed by checks for criminal records and so on.

Thorough check

But "positive vetting" applied to those such as Prime dealing with "secret" and "top secret" information is a much more thorough check. The individual will have an interview with a security officer, answer a long questionnaire about political views and out-of-hours activities, and have to provide two referees who will also be interviewed.

In addition, security officers may approach friends, neighbours and even the subject's family. The clearance of those subject to positive vetting should be reviewed every five years, although there is evidence that because of the number of staff employed at Cheltenham and a shortage of security officers it did not take place so frequently.

One former employee who served for more than 20 years could recall only two reviews during his service.

Ironically, since Prime's arrest the Civil Service Commission has advertised in this newspaper for security officers at GCHQ, offering a salary of £7,820 a year rising to nearly £10,000.

The advertisements stipulated that applicants should be

at least 40, have served in the police at the rank of detective inspector or above or have already been investigating officers in the Civil Service.

One former security officer at Cheltenham pointed out that however carefully this positive vetting procedure was followed, if an individual had a bizarre sexual taste, had never been caught in an illegal act and did not talk about his perversion to others, then there was no way he would show up as a risk.

Some intelligence experts argue that the introduction of psychological tests might be more reliable in showing up such potential risks.

But this would increase still further the time needed before a possible recruit was given clearance to work in a sensitive post.

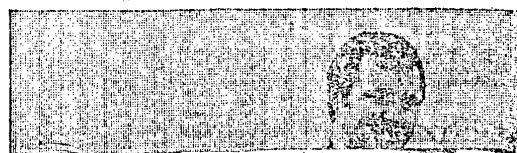
As it is the current vetting procedure may take months and security officials admit that many potentially worthy recruits are lost because they become impatient and turn to other sources of employment.

The vetting and review system is reinforced by internal spying carried out by department heads who are briefed to check on employees who appear to have too much money, or appear to be short of cash through gambling or any other activity or who "show an excessive interest in members of the opposite sex."

This system was introduced in the 1970s to prevent "moles" developing.

But employees admit that because sections are small and loyalties between staff and department heads are strong such reports are rarely made. Instead, the heads are likely to make superficial checks and file routine reports to keep the security men happy.

An added complication is the tension which frequently manifests itself between the civilian boffins who run departments and the internal security men who are often ex-service or ex-police personnel, seen as authoritarian busybodies.



The Daily Telegraph, Thursday, November 11, 1982 19

The silent mole who changed the face of treason

THE fact that the treachery of Geoffrey Prime is regarded on both sides of the Atlantic with such seriousness, illustrates the dramatic way espionage has changed in the electronic age.

Prime had access to the vast files of Comint (Communications Intelligence) which flow into Cheltenham daily.

Comint replaced Humint (Human Intelligence) gathered by agents on the ground, as the staple fodder of the security services.

He was a quiet mole, listening to tapes and leafing through transcripts day after day in a leafy Georgian town.

His patient life was a sharp contrast to the action-man image of James Bond or the intellectual subversion of career diplomats like Philby, Maclean, Burgess and Blunt.

The scale of evesdropping is enormous. It includes monitoring of coded diplomatic and military messages, the recording of radio telephone and telex calls and the interception of microwave communications.

The Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham known as GCHQ, works jointly with its American counterpart the National Security Agency (NSA) based at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Army of linguists

Between them the two agencies have access to information from all over the world and they work in close partnership with similar agencies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Nato countries.

To decipher all this information GCHQ employs a virtual army of linguists. About 8,000 people, almost one-tenth of Cheltenham's population work there.

GCHQ first moved to Cheltenham after the war and until 1976 was hardly ever mentioned in public. Then two journalists, Mr Mark Hosenball, an American, and Mr Duncan Campbell, who still specialises in intelligence matters for the New STATESMAN, reported on its work in the London magazine Time. Their reports suggested its immense monitoring capacity might be a threat to civil liberties.

Mr Hosenball was later deported for publishing information harmful to British security. After writing again



Sir Brian Tovey.

about GCHQ in 1978, Mr Campbell was tried under the Official Secrets Act and acquitted in a controversial case which was known as the ABC trial.

One of its most vocal current critics has been Mr Alex Lawrie, a Labour member of Gloucestershire County Council, who worked there for 22 years as a language specialist. He retired early a year ago after being warned by security officers about breaking the civil service rule about speaking in public about his department.

His offence centred on speaking out at a meeting of the Fabian Society about GCHQ's lack of accountability.

Although the centre's official budget is listed in millions of pounds, even conservative estimates put its real expenditure at hundreds of millions most of which is "laundered" through the Defence Ministry and the Foreign Office.

During the time that Prime worked at GCHQ the centre had two directors. The first, Sir Leonard Hooper, was in charge from 1965-73 following a career in the Foreign Office and Defence Ministry. After leaving the communications base he spent five years as a deputy Secretary in the Cabinet Office.

He was succeeded by Sir Arthur Bonsall, a modern language specialist with a similar background, who remained in charge until 1978. He now lives in Stroud.

The present director is Sir Brian Tovey, 56, a specialist in Oriental and African studies who served in both Naval and Army intelligence.

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11 NOV '82

Repercussions of Prime's treachery may never be known

THE full scale of the damage Geoffrey Prime's treachery has done to Western intelligence will never be fully known.

But the "incalculable harm" of which the Lord Chief Justice spoke yesterday has possibly come closer to driving a rift between the United States and British intelligence services than any other known security leak.

For an enormous and vital proportion of all Western intelligence passes through GCHQ, which works in close co-operation with the American National Security Agency.

Mr Caspar Weinberger, American Secretary of Defence said the Cheltenham branch of Security was "serious out not catastrophic."

Privately at least one senior British official has said that the Prime case is nothing short of a "disaster" for the intelligence services.

The Americans are said to be angry that Britain has not yet provided a full assessment of the harm caused by Prime, although there have been assurances on this side of the Atlantic that Cheltenham is low thought clear of moles.

Advanced translator

Prime worked his way up to the most senior rank of Advanced Linguist Specialist, and became a section head. His job was to transcribe and translate Soviet communications intercepted by both British and American satellites and ground stations around the world.

Much of the information arrives in code and has to be put through Cheltenham's huge and highly-sophisticated decoding computers before reaching the hands of translators.

In his position, Prime would have been able to report to the Soviets not only which of their communications were being monitored, but his information would also reveal which of their codes had been broken.

In response, the Soviets could have done no things:

Shift the frequency or method of transmission to avoid interception, or

TRANSMIT misleading information, thus giving Western agencies a false basis on which to plan further action.

Odes changed

American officials have said that during the period that Prime was employed at GCHQ, several key sources of electronic intelligence on Soviet military, economic and political developments were lost because Moscow changed communications methods or codes.

But in such cases it is impossible to tell exactly what prompted the change, so a full assessment of Prime's decade of interception could never be made.

One senior American official was quoted in the New York

TIMES as saying: "You can never tell for sure what led the Russians to change encryption systems or switch to different channels. It's what you don't know in a case like this that scares you most."

That view was echoed by one British expert who had been involved in security at Cheltenham. "Prime would know the targets and the means of listening, possibly even the base from where communications were being monitored. That information is invaluable to the Soviets."

Crucial negotiations

When Prime's potential knowledge is set against the background of Western-Soviet relations during his time at GCHQ, the reasons for alarm are clear.

His career began at a time of extreme tension following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and lasted throughout the years of detente which included a series of crucial arms negotiations.

In drawing up negotiating positions at such conferences, the kind of intelligence gathered at Cheltenham would play a vital part—as it would in many other major foreign policy decisions on both sides of the Atlantic.

The talks which took place during Prime's employment included the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties, the Helsinki conference on European Security and Cooperation with all its implications for human rights and economic collaboration, and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks aimed at reducing the level of conventional weapons in Europe.

A report in the WASHINGTON POST last month said Prime was thought to have passed on to the Soviets the locations of all British and US nuclear warheads and the day-by-day armed readiness of every division deployed throughout the 13 NATO countries of Western Europe, Turkey and Greece.

That statement was attributed to American intelligence sources. But it was specifically denied at yesterday's trial, as was the suggestion that his spying resulted in the death of Western agents.

His task was to deal with incoming traffic, and that alone would be extremely damaging.

However great the damage done by Prime, the case is unlikely to affect the close working relationship between the American and British intelligence communities, although it

might make the Americans more circumspect in their personal dealings with British agents.

An American intelligence expert said the episode had not destroyed the trust and the valuable working relationship that had been built up over the years.

However, there is concern that publicity over the issue and rumours of a split between the two espionage services could become a hot political issue in the United States with some congressmen using it to urge that the CIA and the NSA should not share their most sensitive secrets with Britain.

Such pressure would cause some bitter feelings, but in the long run is unlikely to succeed. For one thing, Cheltenham's specialised computers have the capacity to decode some information beyond the range of their American equivalents.

In addition, GCHQ has access to intercepts from some listening posts which the U.S., despite its satellite technology, would find difficult to replace.

The Senate Intelligence Committee was briefed on the case soon after Prime's arrest and is still trying to determine how serious the damage is.

But because of the laws which forbid publication of evidence in this country, the American public has until now been told far more about the implications of the case.

In July, following Prime's arrest, Mrs Thatcher made a brief statement in the Commons which gave only the barest details. She did say, however, that any security issues arising as a result would be referred to the Security Commission.

Panel reconstituted

She also said it was impossible to say with absolute certainty whether any other people were likely to be charged. Further evidence would be considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions in the normal way.

Several MPs on both sides of the House put down questions about security when the case first broke. But for one reason or another none was answered.

One comparatively minor change in the security procedure has however been linked with the case, mainly because of its timing last month just as the most alarming reports were coming out in America.

The three members of the Civil Service security appeals panel—Sir Richard Powell, 73, Sir Clifford Jarrett, 73, and Sir Richard Hayward, 72—were asked to resign.

Mr Justice Lloyd, 53, a High Court judge, was appointed as chairman and will serve with Sir Patrick Nairne, 61, Master of St. Catherine's College, Oxford, and a former civil servant, and Mr Edward Hewlett, 61, formerly deputy general secretary of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants.

The panel's function is to advise on appeals by people who have failed "positive vetting" because a Minister believes there is some ground to doubt their reliability. It last considered a case in 1969.

The panel is a minor part of the security apparatus, but the change was seen as a gesture by Mrs Thatcher towards the Americans that everything possible to improve security was being done.

ian target

PAYMENTS BY KGB ONLY PIN-MONEY

PRIME betrayed his country's secrets to the Russians for virtual pin-money in world espionage terms.

In 14 years as a traitor he was only paid a total of just over £8,000.

British Intelligence sources point out that Prime's miserly rewards back up his story that he got sucked into the top stream of espionage activities for ideological reasons.

His biggest payment, £4,000, would appear to have been made on his last visit behind the Iron Curtain, to Potsdam, almost exactly a year ago, when he was closely questioned about top secret Allied activities.

£400 sweeteners

His other payments, if his account is to be believed, were rarely more than £600 or £700. His first sweetener in 1968 was a mere £400.

He was usually paid on his trips to the Eastern Bloc, but according to him, he also collected cash at secret hiding places, once near a lake in Esher, and another time at a pick up point near Banstead Station, Surrey.

TRIPS ABROAD FOR MASTERS

PRIME, codenamed Rowlands by the Russians, was first recruited by the KGB in 1968, while he served in the RAF in Berlin.

He made regular trips behind the Iron Curtain for debriefing sessions, his last journey being to East Germany only a year ago.

In 1975, just after he had been briefed by his employers to receive fresh high security classification, he attended a series of meetings in Vienna when he passed over photographic copies of the top secret material.

Contact broken

It was on another of his trips to Vienna in May, 1976, that he was told that if he should ever wish to defect, he would be given a pension and the rank of colonel in the KGB.

Prime claims to have lost contact with the Russians after leaving GCHQ, but said he was contacted again in April, 1980 and asked to go to Vienna.

He took up the invitation, taking with him rolls of film of secret documents, and was treated to a three day stay on a Russian cruise ship on the Danube.

Quiet 'loner' who enjoyed football and his family

By ALAN COPPS

THE public face of Geoffrey Prime was that of a quiet family man. He doted on his three stepsons, aged 10, 14 and 15.

He enjoyed football matches and was something of an ace at crosswords.

His fascination with the Russian language and culture was obvious, but he rarely talked about politics and never discussed his work at GCHQ.

His taxi-driver colleagues called him a loner.

His home was a neat, modern detached house in a quiet lane behind one of Cheltenham's gracious crescents.

The front door of Laburnum Cottage in Pittville Crescent Lane, is the kind of modest facade behind which many secrets are stored in the Cotswold Spa, where at least one in 10 of the working population is employed at GCHQ.

In the years he lived there Prime made few close friends, but one man who got to know him better than most was fellow-driver Mr Glynn Priday, 32.

Computer tape

After Prime left GCHQ in 1977 he first worked for a company called Cheltax, a firm which still has a contract to transport computer tape from the Cheltenham bases to various destinations.

When two years later a dozen Cheltax drivers decided to set up their own company Prime and Mr Priday were among the leaders.

"We used him as a secretary, because we could pick his brains to write letters. He was very good with words," said Mr Priday. "There is no way he was a communist. He liked making money too much."

Prime put in a lot of work to help set up the co-operative called A 2 B taxis, but he did not socialise with the other members.

Chat and coffee

"The rest of the blokes would get out of their cars and come into the office for a chat and some coffee. But not Geoffrey, his car was his world. If he had to wait for another job he would wait in the car with a flask and his books."

"We knew he had worked at GCHQ and that he was an interpreter, he talked about having spent some time in Berlin. We thought he still did a bit of that work while working for us."

"He would often carry Russian newspapers and books around with him and he wrote in Russian and German."

Sometimes the taxi drivers at both companies were shaken when Prime would turn up for the night shift carrying along a large multi-wave band radio which he tuned to Radio Moscow. It was that radio that

appeared as an exhibit at the Old Bailey.

At other times he would ask for evenings off so he could drive to London for Russian films or other cultural events:

"He said he'd left GCHQ because of the pressure of work. He got fed up with going to the same place day after day. He said he liked the freedom of being a taxi driver."

Geoffrey Prime left A 2 B taxis after a dispute over plans to turn it into a limited company. In November 1981 he went to work for a German wine company based in Bristol.

The shock of Prime's arrest was as great for his family as for his former colleagues.

Prime was born on Feb. 21, 1938. His father, Mr George Prime was described as a copper wire drawer of Humble Bec Bank, Alton, near Stoke on Trent.

He has two brothers. Mr Vincent Prime, the younger, a council roadsweeper, who still lives near Stoke, has not seen Geoffrey for about 20 years. Mr George Prime, the second brother, is a joiner at Blythe Bridge, near Stoke. His sister lives in Uttoxeter, Staffs.

Geoffrey Prime went to the village church school until he was 14 and then to St Joseph's Roman Catholic Secondary School in Trent Vale, Stoke.

Language course

At 18 he entered national service with the RAF and was persuaded to make it his career. After serving in Kenya he was selected for a Russian language course at RAF Leuchars in Fife, where he also studied German.

He qualified from that course in May, 1964, and the following month was posted to classified work at RAF Gatow in West Berlin. In 1966 he was promoted to corporal and in 1968 to sergeant.

It was while he was in Berlin, shortly before he left the RAF that he made his contact with the Russians.

In 1969 he was married for the first time to Miss Helena Organ in London when he was described as a Linguist Officer (Foreign Office).

That marriage ended in divorce in 1975. The following year Prime was already working in Cheltenham for the Joint Technical Language Service, the official name for the translators' department at Oakley.

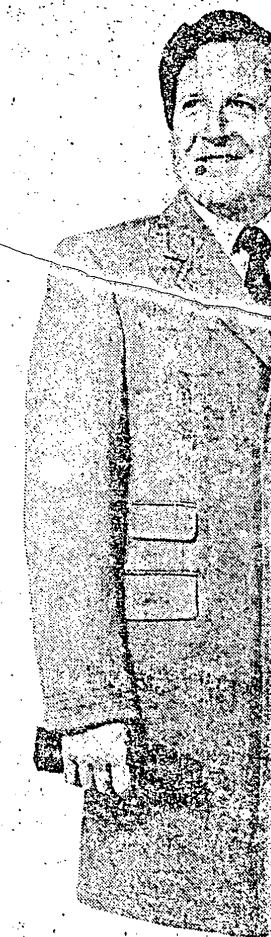
In 1976 he rented a room in Cirencester Road, Cheltenham and it was there that he met his present wife, then Mrs Rhona Ratcliff, whose marriage was ending.

In 1977 Prime, now promoted to a section head, was married to Rhona and wholeheartedly adopted her family. Shortly afterwards Prime's career at GCHQ ended.

The Daily Telegraph, Thursday

The Trade Covert Coat New Wool a distinct im

Made in Great Britain from
this fawn Covert Coat
tailored for the man
With all the meticulous
detail that makes all



GIEVES & I
of No. 1 Savoy

LONDON	1 SAVILE ROW W1	LONDON
EDINBURGH	48 GEORGE STREET	CHESTER
WINCHESTER	1 & 2 THE SQUARE	BATH
PORTSMOUTH	22 THE HARD	EASTBOURNE
HARROW	32 HIGH STREET	PLYMOUTH
CAMBERLEY	1 HIGH STREET	BROCKLEY
MALVERN	WELLS ROAD	DEAL
PORTLAND	CASILETOWN	